

Summary

NPS Winter Use Roving Team Meeting with Conservation Interests, Bozeman, MT

Date: December 6, 2005

Location: Bozeman, GYC Conference Room

Present: Steve Thomas (NPCA-by telephone), Mark Menlove (Winter Wildlands Alliance-by telephone), Kristin Brengel (Wilderness Society-by telephone), Abigail Dylan (Earth Justice), Betsy Buffington (Wilderness Society), Jon Catton (Consultant), Tim Stevens (NPCA), Amy McNamara (GYC), John Sacklin, Mike Yochim, Denice Swanke

1) Purpose agency/group or NPS gave for wanting a visit at this time:

- share information about modeling scenarios, Gates report
- answer questions about the planning process, including MOU
- review project history as needed

2) Results of this meeting and/or next steps:

Group remains interested in the process and appreciates any further updates.

3) Points raised:

- Pleased with market changes and past two winter operations.
- Concern that NPS continues to allow/consider snowmobile use when EPA and others have recommended a transition to snowcoach only.
- Consider displaying mean rather than per day averages for snowmobile visitation.
- Snowcoach visitation is up for several reasons, including visitor demographics and the increased interpretive opportunities on coaches.
- Consider ten-year data sets for regional visitation rather than four-year.
- Concern that NPS will develop the environmental consequences section before receiving the results of Bishop's 05/06 data.
- To the extent possible, there is a need to reflect technology improvements in modeling. DEIS needs to acknowledge modeling and Bishop's results.
- Concern that reader will be able to clearly compare across alternatives in DEIS; be transparent re: impacts of x number of snowmobiles to x number of coaches.
- Modeling should be done at maximum passenger levels, not 7 passengers/vehicle.
- Concern that many of scenarios have been previously addressed and do not merit reconsideration.
- Concern about lack of continuous improvements in BAT.
- Consider comparing "old" bombs to 4-strokes while developing snowcoach BAT.

4) Questions asked:

- Has NPS studied reasons behind the trends in recent winter visitation?
- Is NPS actually seeing a trend in snowmobile visitation or just a change in status?
- Has there been an increase in north entrance wheeled vehicle traffic or in non-motorized use?
- What are the revenue trends at West?
- Is the scoping report available?
- Were form letters counted individually or as one?
- How were the coaches chosen for Bishop's work in 04/05?
- Will NPS model clean diesel vs. currently available diesel?
- Why is there a limit on snowcoaches and why is it 105?
- How are allocations decided?
- What is the interplay between the new/draft management policies and this effort?
- How is monitoring data being used?
- How will adaptive management be considered in this EIS?
- Who is doing the economic analysis and will they only review winter season?
- Who are NPS DC contacts and when will that dialogue occur?